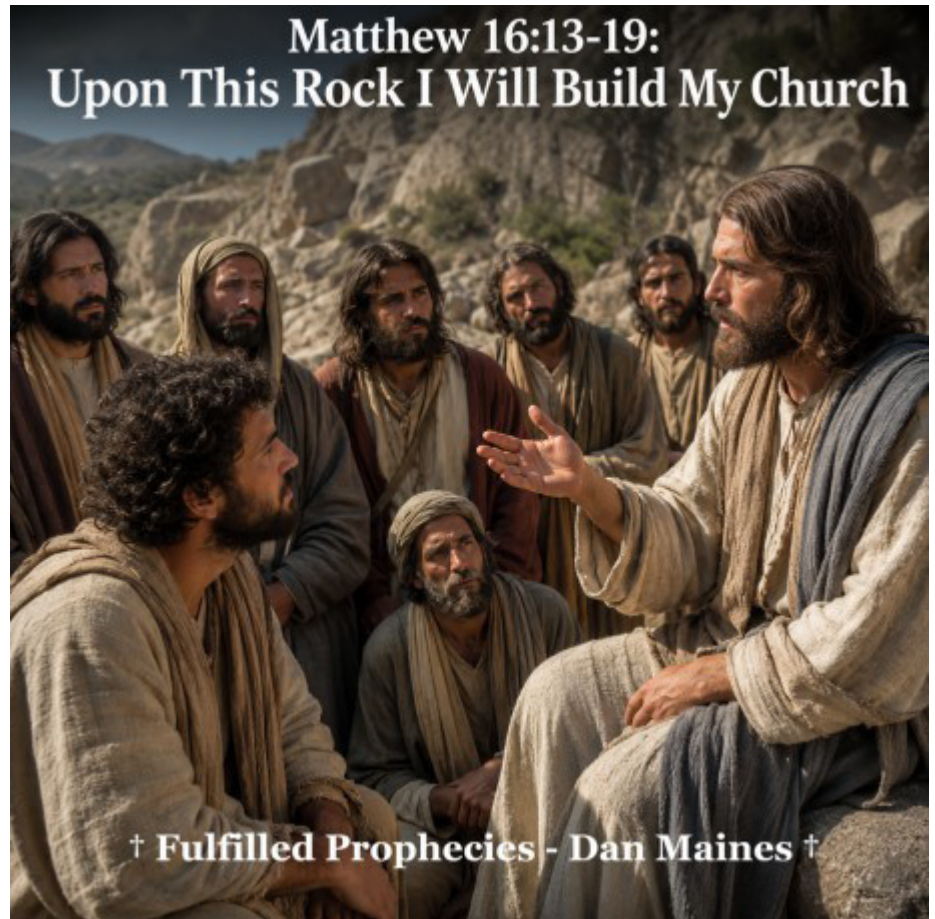


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**Matthew 16:13-19:
Upon This Rock I
Will Build My
Church**



By Dan Maines

Matthew 16:13-19: Upon This Rock I Will Build My Church

Introduction

† Matthew 16:13-19 is one of the most important conversations Jesus ever had with His disciples. It identifies who Jesus is, what His church is built upon, who holds authority over death and Hades, and how the kingdom of heaven would be opened.

† The central question isn't ultimately about Peter, it's about Jesus. "Who do you say that I am?" Everything that follows rests upon Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

† Jesus didn't announce the establishment of another earthly kingdom, another physical temple, or another religious system centered in Jerusalem. He announced, "I will build my church," and He declared that the gates of Hades wouldn't prevail against it.

† This passage reaches directly into the first-century transition from the Old Covenant order to the kingdom Christ established. The promised kingdom was already drawing near, and Jesus was preparing His disciples for what was about to unfold. (Matthew 4:17; Luke 21:31-32)

Matthew 16:13-19

Now when Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets." He said to them, "But who do you yourselves say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."

† The entire passage begins with the identity of Christ. Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the foundation of everything Jesus says afterward. The church belongs to Christ because Christ is its foundation and its Lord. (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20)

† Jesus said, "I will build my church." He didn't say He would restore the Old Covenant nation, rebuild an earthly temple, or establish His kingdom thousands of years later. His kingdom was already being announced as near, and His disciples were being prepared to enter it. (Matthew 4:17; Colossians 1:13)

† The "gates of Hades" picture the power of death. Gates don't

attack, they hold people inside. Jesus was declaring that death and Hades couldn't imprison His people permanently. Christ would conquer death and ultimately abolish the power that Hades held over the dead. (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:18)

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

† Paul leaves no room for another ultimate foundation. Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which God's people stand.

† This helps explain Matthew 16. Whatever role Peter had among the apostles, the church doesn't ultimately rest upon a mortal man. It rests upon Jesus Christ and the truth of who He is. (Matthew 21:42; 1 Peter 2:4-6)

† Peter himself later directed believers to Christ as the living stone and cornerstone. Peter didn't present himself as the object of faith, he pointed people to Jesus. (1 Peter 2:4-6)

Ephesians 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

† Paul explains what Christ was building. It wasn't another physical temple in Jerusalem. God's people themselves were being built together into His spiritual dwelling.

† Christ is the chief cornerstone, while the apostles and prophets form the foundational witness through which the gospel was proclaimed. The emphasis remains centered on Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:5-6)

† Jew and Gentile were being formed into one household and one holy temple in Christ. This was the New Covenant reality replacing the old system of physical sanctuary, priesthood, and

covenant separation. (Ephesians 2:14-18; Hebrews 8:13)

Matthew 18:18-20

Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

† Matthew 18 is important because the authority to bind and loose isn't presented as something belonging exclusively to Peter. Jesus speaks this authority to His disciples in connection with the administration and discipline of His community.

† The apostles had a unique foundational role as Christ established His church and revealed the New Covenant message. Their authority came from Christ, not from themselves. (John 20:21-23; Ephesians 2:20)

† The kingdom wasn't dependent upon an earthly throne or physical headquarters. Christ promised His presence among His gathered people.

Acts 2:36-41

Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what are we to do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on urging them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

† Here we see Peter exercising the responsibility Christ had

given him. He publicly proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Christ and opened the gospel message to thousands.

† Notice that Peter didn't direct people to himself. He directed them to Jesus Christ, repentance, forgiveness, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

† Peter also warned that first-century audience concerning "this crooked generation." The church was growing while that Old Covenant generation was approaching the judgment Jesus had already announced. (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34)

Colossians 1:12-14

giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

† Paul didn't tell believers that the kingdom remained thousands of years in their future. He said they had already been transferred into the kingdom of God's Son.

† This is critical when reading Matthew 16. Jesus had promised the keys of the kingdom, and within the New Testament itself believers are described as already participating in that kingdom.

† The kingdom was becoming a present spiritual reality in Christ during the first-century covenant transition, even while the Old Covenant order was growing old and approaching its removal. (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:28)

Hebrews 2:14-15

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

† This helps us understand the force of Jesus' statement that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Christ entered death and conquered its power.

† The church couldn't be defeated by Hades because its Lord

had authority over death. Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that the grave couldn't hold Him. (Acts 2:24; Revelation 1:18)

† The New Testament story moves toward the complete victory over death and Hades, not toward their permanent continuation as victorious powers over God's people. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Revelation 20:14)

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The believers addressed by Hebrews were receiving the unshakable kingdom. The language is present and active, not a prediction about Christians waiting thousands of years for the kingdom to begin.

† The surrounding context contrasts what could be shaken with what would remain. The temporary covenant order was passing away while the unshakable kingdom remained. (Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 12:26-27)

† This is the church Christ promised to build, a kingdom and people founded upon Him that couldn't be destroyed by persecution, Jerusalem's fall, death, or Hades.

Historical References

† Clement of Rome, writing about the apostles, specifically identifies Peter and Paul as examples who endured persecution and suffering for Christ. Clement's testimony shows the prominent first-century ministry of Peter while keeping the focus upon faithfulness to Christ. (1 Clement 5)

† Eusebius records the early Christian tradition concerning Peter's preaching and martyrdom during Nero's reign. Whatever later traditions developed concerning Peter, the earliest historical picture presents him as an apostolic witness to Christ, exactly as we see throughout Acts. (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 2, Chapter 25)

† Eusebius also records that before the war and Jerusalem's destruction, believers in Jerusalem were instructed to leave the

city and settle at Pella. This historical tradition fits the first-century setting of Jesus' warnings concerning Jerusalem and the preservation of His people through that judgment.

(Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5)

† Josephus records the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. That historical judgment brought the Old Covenant temple order to its visible end, while the church Christ built continued beyond Jerusalem's destruction.

(Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapters 4-5)

How It Applies To Us Today

† Our faith isn't built upon an earthly city, physical temple, denomination, religious institution, or human leader. Jesus Christ is the foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

† We don't need to wait for Christ to establish His kingdom. Believers have been transferred into the kingdom of God's Son and have received a kingdom that can't be shaken. (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28)

† We are God's spiritual household and temple. God's presence isn't confined to Jerusalem or any physical sanctuary. His people are being built together in Christ. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

† Death doesn't overthrow Christ's church. Jesus has the keys of death and Hades, and our hope rests in the One who conquered death. (Revelation 1:18)

† The question Jesus asked remains the question every person must answer: Who is Jesus? Peter's answer remains the heart of Christian confession, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:15-16)

Q & A Appendix

Q: Was Jesus saying that Peter personally was the ultimate foundation of the church?

A: Peter clearly had a unique apostolic role, but Scripture explicitly identifies Jesus Christ as the foundation and chief cornerstone. Peter himself pointed believers to Christ as the chosen cornerstone. (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-6)

Q: What did Jesus mean by the gates of Hades not prevailing against His church?

A: Hades represented the realm and power of death. Jesus was declaring that death couldn't ultimately hold or defeat His people. Christ conquered death and holds the keys of death and Hades. (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:18)

Q: Were the keys of the kingdom given because Peter would replace Christ as head of the church?

A: No. Peter received an important apostolic responsibility, but Christ remained the builder, foundation, cornerstone, and head of His church. Peter consistently preached Christ rather than himself. (Acts 2:36-41; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Colossians 1:18)

Q: Is Christ's kingdom still waiting to be established in our future?

A: No. Paul said first-century believers had already been transferred into Christ's kingdom, and Hebrews said they were receiving a kingdom that couldn't be shaken. We live in that kingdom reality today. (Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 16:13-19; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:19-22; Matthew 18:18-20; Acts 2:36-41; Colossians 1:12-14; Hebrews 2:14-15; Hebrews 12:28

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 2, Chapter 25; Book 3, Chapter 5; Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapters 4-5

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